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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 DOHA 000417

C O R R E C T E D COPY TEXT PARA 6

SIPDIS

NEA/FO

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [IR](#) [SU](#) [QA](#)

SUBJECT: MFA MINSTATE TO A/AS FELTMAN: IRAN WILL NOT  
ABANDON QUEST FOR NUKES UNLESS IN RESPONSE TO "BIG PRIZE"  
FROM THE WEST

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Classified By: Ambassador Joseph E. LeBaron for reasons 1.4 (b and d).

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(C) KEY POINTS  
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-- Acting Assistant Secretary for Near Eastern Affairs  
Jeffrey Feltman, accompanied by Ambassador, stressed in his  
June 16 meeting with MFA Minister of State for Foreign  
Affairs Ahmed Al Mahmoud that POTUS wants a comprehensive  
relationship with Qatar. Al Mahmoud agreed, saying that a  
strategic dialogue could begin at whatever level the U.S.  
wished, as the two countries were "working toward one end."

-- AA/S Feltman noted that the United States had not yet  
taken a decision on strategic dialogues in general, but that  
strategic consultations can begin at once.

-- AA/S Feltman stressed that POTUS is committed to a  
comprehensive Middle East peace, noting that this would  
require compromise on both sides and expressing concern that  
Al Jazeera is not contributing to a spirit of compromise. Al  
Mahmoud replied that the Qataris had problems with the  
network, too.

-- Al Mahmoud said that Iran would not stop short of  
acquiring nuclear weapons unless in response to Western  
recognition of Iran as a regional superpower. Such an end,  
he said, would leave the GCC states as nothing more than a  
pool of assets at Iran's disposal.

End Key Points.

¶1. (C) On June 16, accompanied by Ambassador, Staff  
Assistant, and Poloff, AA/S Jeffrey Feltman met with Qatari  
MFA Minstate for Foreign Affairs Ahmed bin Abdullah Al  
Mahmoud. Also present in the meeting on the Qatari side were  
the Foreign Minister's Assistant for Follow-Up Affairs  
Mohammad Al-Rumaihi and MFA Director of European and American  
Affairs Adel Al Khal.

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AL MAHMOUD: QATAR AND U.S ARE WORKING TOWARD THE SAME END  
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¶2. (C) AA/S Feltman began the meeting by thanking Al Mahmoud  
for receiving him and by noting that he had just met with the  
PM. He stressed that the United States wanted a  
constructive, comprehensive relationship with Qatar, and that  
S had directed him to come to Doha on this, his first trip to

the Gulf. Al Mahmoud said that the POTUS speech in Cairo was excellent and that it raised expectations in each of the seven areas it addressed.

13. (C) On the issue of the proposed strategic dialogue between the U.S. and Qatar, the Minister of State said that it should begin at whatever level the U.S. thought best, since "we are working together toward one end." AA/S Feltman said that the USG had not yet made a decision on the issue of strategic dialogues globally, but that strategic consultations should begin at all levels right away. Such consultations would involve sharing insights on a full range of issues.

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THE COMMITMENT TO A COMPREHENSIVE MIDDLE EAST PEACE  
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14. (C) AA/S Feltman said that POTUS was committed to achieving a comprehensive Middle East peace. He stressed that this process would require a great deal of compromise on both sides, and that Doha-based Al Jazeera television was not helping move public opinion in the Arab world in a direction that would foster a spirit of compromise. Al Mahmoud replied that Qatar had problems with Al Jazeera, too, and that perhaps the network was just playing to its audience.

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IRAN SEEKS REGIONAL SUPERPOWER STATUS  
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15. (C) AA/S Feltman asked the Minstate for his insights on Iran. The Minstate stressed that Iran had the right to nuclear technology for civilian applications, but that it would not stop short of acquiring nuclear weapons unless it was in response "to a big prize from the West." When asked what that prize might be, Al Mahmoud replied that Iran wanted

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to be recognized as a regional superpower, with the right to extract such concessions such as the withdrawal of Western forces from the region. Under such a scenario, the GCC would merely be a pool of resources for Iran. He predicted that "we will see within a year what they have (in the way of nuclear technology)."

16. (C) Al-Mahmoud urged that the U.S. not place too much significance on the current demonstrations in Iran. He stressed that demonstrations were taking place only in Tehran, "where they want change." He noted that there were no demonstrations in the provinces, "where they need Ahmedinejad." Al-Mahmoud said that he did not expect a second Ahmedinejad administration to differ from the first, as the Iranian President would see the election result as an affirmation of his policies.

17. (C) When AA/S asked what approach the West should take in dealing with Iran, Al-Mahmoud suggested that the time had come to ask Iran directly what it wanted. He said that any approach would have to be carried out in close coordination with the Gulf states, and he criticized the Europeans for offering security guarantees to Iran without first consulting the GCC states. He cautioned, however, that Iran always pocketed concessions and asked for more.

18. (C) Al-Mahmoud said that it was too early to tell whether Iran had changed its policies as a result of the recent POTUS speech in Cairo, and that Qatar had not had any close consultations with Iran since that time. He stressed that Iran would seek actions, not words, from the President.

19. (C) AA/S Feltman noted that Iran had changed its behavior in Iraq. Al-Mahmoud agreed, but noted that Iran did whatever was necessary at the moment to increase its influence.

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SUDAN: A MODEL FOR U.S.-QATAR COOPERATION

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¶10. (C) AA/S Feltman applauded Al-Mahmoud for Qatar's diplomacy on Sudan. Al Mahmoud noted that he had talked with SE Scott Gration the night before, and that they were cooperating closely. AA/S Feltman said that U.S.-Qatar cooperation on Sudan was a model for how the two countries could work together toward common goals. He reiterated that such cooperation should take place on many issues and at many levels.

¶11. (C) On the current status of peace negotiations in Sudan, Al Mahmoud said that the Sudanese government and the rebel groups were currently at an impasse over which came first: the release of prisoners or the declaration of a cease-fire.

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GULF AND REGIONAL ISSUES

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¶12. (C) Minsate Al Mahmoud said that, at present, Qatar had virtually no trade with Bahrain, but predicted that the causeway that will link the two would change that. When AA/S Feltman asked if there were plans to eventually supply Bahrain with natural gas, Al Mahmoud said no; Qatar's exports of LNG were already under contract for delivery to the U.S and the UK.

¶13. (C) Al Mahmoud said that Qatar has no agenda for its current presidency of the Arab League. He pointed out that Qatar had asked Jordanian King Abdullah II to speak on behalf of the Arabs during his recent trip to Washington. "If the Arabs want us to do more, we will" he said.

¶14. (C) On Lebanon, Al Mahmoud said that everyone accepted the results of the recent elections. He added that the composition of the new government was a matter for the Lebanese people to decide.

¶15. (C) On Iraq, Al Mahmoud said that the government should reflect balance between Sunni and Shi'a, and not be dominated by the Shi'a.

¶16. (C) AA/S Feltman has cleared this message.

LeBaron